

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 15 October 2014. Attendance:-

Councillor Glazier (Chair)

Councillors Bennett, Bentley, Dowling, Elkin, Maynard, Simmons and Tidy

1. Scrutiny Review of Early Years Attainment

1.1 The Cabinet has considered a report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on its review of Early Years Attainment. The report is included elsewhere on the agenda (see item 8). The Scrutiny report has previously been circulated to all Members.

1.2 The aim of the review was to examine the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) because it is the basis for a child's education and supports later learning. There are possibilities to influence attainment through Children's Centres and in other parts of Early Years provision. Early Years education covers children from birth up to the age of five years old. During this time a child may be educated at home, cared for by a child minder, attend a nursery or playgroup, and when they turn four years old, enter a reception class at a primary school.

1.3 In welcoming the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (as set out in Appendix 1 to this report) on the specific recommendations and endorsed it as its response to the recommendations. The actions outlined in the action plan provide an opportunity to recognise the importance of Early Year Outcomes as a platform for children's future achievements and aspirations. The recommendations of the report will demonstrate the Council's commitment to raising the profile, across our providers, of the significance of the development of good quality early years provision throughout East Sussex. It will make a useful contribution to the planned programme of further development of a rich early years experience.

1.4 The Cabinet, in welcoming the report, recommends the County Council to –

- ✧ approve the response of the Director of Children's Services on the implementation of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report.

15 October 2014

KEITH GLAZIER
Chair

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN		
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	Home learning & Children's Centres	
R1	<p>Children's Centres fulfil a number of roles. However, they should focus their work to improve children's early development and educational attainment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conducting outreach work in order to know all the families in their area and to identify their needs early (children's centres KPI 9 & 10). b) Co-ordinating work to support families to ensure school readiness and language development needs are being met (children's centres KPI 1 & 5). c) Making child development progress and language development checkers available to all parents/carers. d) Providing parenting courses for parents/carers and examine ways of involving parents/carers in their children's learning to improve home learning environments (children's centres KPI 4). <p>Working with Health providers to review the child development advice and guidance given to parents/carers from pre- birth through to age 2 in the light of the withdrawal of free universal antenatal classes.</p>	<p>Children's Centres offer a range of services that encourage and support children's development and activities are planned that address key areas of early learning. Centres identify those children who are at a higher risk of achieving poor outcomes and monitor their take up of services.</p> <p>Centres acknowledge that many families may find it difficult to access services in the designated building and do therefore take services out into communities, an example being a Come and Play session that is offered at Jarvis Brook, an area of need near Crowborough, which focuses on encouraging language development and offers a range of home learning suggestion for parents to take away.</p> <p>The focus on early communication has resulted in the development of an Early Communication Pathway in partnership with the SLES early years improvement team and the NHS. The pathway aims to identify children whose language development is delayed or at risk of delay. The use of language checkers, a key element of the pathway, is extending and these materials are now available on CZONE for early years setting to access. It is not planned to make language checkers available for parents to use independently as if any developmental delay is identified professionals need to be on hand to offer advice and support.</p>

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN		
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	<p>Those families who have more complex needs are offered support at home by the Children's Centre keywork service. The keyworker will agree a plan with a family which addresses a range of issues which impact on a child's development and readiness for school.</p> <p>The keywork service also offers parenting courses across the County in partnership with the NHS. Courses are scheduled in every Children's Centre Cluster. The courses offered are evidence based and cover a range of issues that impact on children's readiness to learn.</p> <p>Children's Centres work closely with the health visiting service who, through the recent "Call to Action" and resulting expansion of the service, are now offering a number of universal contacts at significant points in a child's early years. Health Visitors are able to identify children who are at risk of developmental delay and signpost them to group based activity or refer them to the Team Around the Family (which includes the Children's Centre keywork service) where support needs can be discussed and a support plan developed. It would be inappropriate to duplicate these universal contacts at a time when resources are decreasing.</p> <p>We have discussed with colleagues in the NHS the recent replacement of universal antenatal preparation classes with on line support. Antenatal education is not included in new national payment arrangements for midwifery. CCG colleagues, and colleagues in East Sussex Health Care Trust appreciate our concern about opportunities for expectant parents to meet each other, and the need for additional support for the most vulnerable families. Very</p>	

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION			DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
			vulnerable pregnant women will receive support through the keywork service. In addition, however, we have developed plans with midwifery, health visiting and Family Nurse Partnership colleagues to deliver new group based support to young parents in Hastings. The provision is due to start in early October. If the model is successful it may be extended to vulnerable parents in other areas.	
R2	Following the withdrawal of early years teachers from Children's Centres, examine the feasibility and benefits of bringing Children's Centres and the Early Years Improvement Team under the same management to strengthen the early years education role of Children's Centres.		<p>Although currently sitting in different divisions within the department Children's Centres and the early years improvement team work closely together to ensure services are consistent and avoid duplication. The two services jointly facilitate network meetings for early years settings and have worked together to develop and implement the early communication pathway.</p> <p>Children's Centres also work closely with social care colleagues in the delivery of early help to families with complex needs. With the forthcoming transfer of commissioning responsibility for Health Visiting and the Family Nurse Partnership to the Local Authority in October 2015, a review of the structural relationship between the different elements of early years provision will be appropriate.</p>	
	Information for parents and carers			

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION			DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			TIMESCALE		
R3	<p>Children attending high quality early years provision have higher levels of attainment. It is important for parents and carers to have good information so they can access high quality early years provision and understand the benefits for their children. The review board recommends that:</p> <p>a) Information for parents/carers on the quality of pre-school providers should be improved to make it easier for them to identify high quality provision in their area and those settings who are working with the Council to improve attainment.</p> <p>b) Information for parents/carers on the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) web site must be easier to find, be up to date and show the Ofsted rating for the setting together with the qualification level of the staff (e.g. an A-Z list of settings assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding' together with qualification levels of lead and support staff).</p> <p>c) The ESCC website should contain advice for parents/carers highlighting the benefits of choosing 'good' or 'outstanding' settings for children's education.</p>	<p>The SLES Early Years team has been exploring ways of improving communication with parents and carers so that information is more accessible and recognises the importance of ensuring that parents and carers receive clear information about the location and quality of Early Years settings in their area.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Children's Centres and other agencies to provide a wider network of communication links, so that parents and carers have a clear understanding of how to access appropriate Early Years provision /support for their children. • Improve the quality of information provided on the website. 	March 2015	November 2014				
Transitions, assessment and the quality of early years teaching practice								
R4	<p>Attainment can be improved if pre-school early years providers work closely with primary schools and one another to improve transitions and school readiness, the quality of their assessment of children's progress, and their teaching practice. The review board recommends that:</p> <p>a) The Early Years 'Village' and quality across the foundation stage (QUAFS) projects are extended to all primary schools by September 2016.</p> <p>b) Early years hubs are developed to promote good practice through clusters of providers and consideration be given to</p>	<p>It is pleasing that the Scrutiny Review Panel has acknowledged the role played by the Early Years Village Project in improving the quality of education for children in East Sussex and also endorses the planned strategy to establish Early Years Hubs to promote good practice across the county.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the successful Village Project approach to strengthen the transition between Early Years Providers and Primary Schools, by identifying schools and settings 	October 2014					

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION			DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	<p>creating foundation stage leaders/area co-ordinators for early years settings (a strategy is currently being introduced by the Early Years Team).</p> <p>c) Pre-school providers should be included in primary school alliances to facilitate the spreading of best practice across all settings.</p> <p>d) ESCC should take opportunities to promote pre-school provision co-located with primary schools, which could be private, voluntary or maintained provision.</p>	<p>in each Education Improvement Partnership to develop at least one Village Project per area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a group of identified headteachers to develop strategically placed Early Years Hubs across the county • Monitor the impact of the model to strengthen Early Years and KS1 outcomes by collecting progress data and feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Capital Project colleagues to ensure that all new building projects related to expansion of places include pre-school provision. <p>Outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of schools and settings engaged in Village Project increased by 50%. • In Year progress data and end of Key Stage data shows at least a 5% increase from previous year. 	<p>October 2014</p> <p>January and April 2015 data collection points and end of Key Stage outcomes July 2015</p> <p>As opportunities arise</p>	

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	Quality of Early Years Provision		
R5	<p>Evidence suggests that attending good quality early years provision leads to higher levels of attainment. However, not all provision in East Sussex is 'good' or 'outstanding' and levels of attainment are below national averages. The review board recommends that:</p> <p>a) ESCC continues to work with early years settings in the Ofsted categories of 'requires improvement/satisfactory' and 'inadequate', so that at least 85% of settings are in Ofsted categories of 'good' or 'outstanding' by September 2015 and at least 90% by September 2016 to ensure all parents/carers have access to a good quality setting in their area.</p> <p>b) The Early Years Improvement Team continue to develop programmes to tackle early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile weaknesses in literacy development, communication & language development and mathematics development.</p> <p>c) Primary schools consider including an early years specialist as part of the school leadership team, and governing bodies should appoint a governor with specific responsibility for the early years foundation stage (EYFS).</p> <p>d) ESCC should develop enhanced quality assurance measures and target those settings whose attainment results are not in line with their Ofsted rating.</p>	<p>The CSD recognises the significance of high quality early years provision in securing the best outcomes for children and shares the aspirations of the Scrutiny Review to raise the percentage of early years settings that are in OfSTED categories of good or outstanding.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Review the Service's processes for support and challenge to Early Years settings, especially those that are inadequate' or 'requires improvement', to ensure that they provide appropriately robust measures for improvement.</p> <p>Outcome measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New enhanced and intensive support protocols agreed and communicated to settings. • Increase in the number of settings improving OfSTED grading on re-inspection. <p>Training for headteachers during 2013-2014 raised their awareness of the importance of their engagement with the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that they are able to support and challenge their practitioners regarding the quality of the curriculum and assessment in their schools.</p> <p>This has had a significant impact on East Sussex 2014 outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and has enabled headteachers to highlight to governors, the need to appoint highly qualified staff and allocate sufficient resources for further development of good quality provision</p>	<p>October 2014</p> <p>Termly review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - December 14 - March 2015 - July 2015

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN		
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	<p>at this key stage.</p> <p>The changes to the OfSTED framework so that the Early Years Foundation Stage in school receives a separate judgement, emphasises even more, the need for schools to be able to access good quality training and support.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commissioning of specialist training in Early Years speech, language and communication to accelerate improvement in targeted schools and settings; • Provision of EYFS CPD training programme to increase the focus on writing in Reception and early mathematics; • Identifying schools and pre-schools where improved outcomes are required; • Provision of ELKLAN training to identified schools and pre-schools. • Ensuring that all schools report in-year 'progress towards targets' attainment data for writing and mathematics. • Ensuring that schools participating in targeted programmes provide entry and exit data, as well as ongoing data throughout the programme. <p>Outcome measures</p> <p>Increased levels of attainment across all aspects of language and communication and mathematics evident in end of year assessment, which are above national averages.</p>	<p>Termly</p> <p>September 2014</p> <p>Term 2 2014 and Term 4 2015</p> <p>Term 1 2014 to Term 4 2015 (according to programme)</p>
	Qualifications and Training	
R6	Evidence highlights the role that highly qualified early years practitioners have in improving attainment. The review board believe that ESCC should take action to improve the qualification levels and practice of early years leaders and staff in East Sussex.	The CSD endorses this view and welcomes the recommendation that practitioners in East Sussex should have access to, and be encouraged to acquire, higher levels of qualifications. Although a wide range of training is offered

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION			DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			TIMESCALE		
<p>It recommends that:</p> <p>a) ESSC adopt a policy that all child minders and pre-school early years staff should hold or be working towards at least a Level 3 qualification by September 2016. Any prospective child minders should be required to obtain a Level 3 qualification.</p> <p>b) ESSC provide a list of preferred training providers for Level 3 early educator training courses and higher level training, to increase the number of early years staff and practitioners with higher level qualifications.</p> <p>c) The Early Years Improvement Team provide training for managers of early years settings in staff mentoring/supervision, appraisal and staff development to support the development of best practice within settings (i.e. Level 5 minimum qualification standards for lead practitioners).</p>			<p>to all settings, the opportunity to improve qualifications is limited, due to financial constraints and lack of access to appropriate courses.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission leadership and management support/training for voluntary management committees and owners in Early Years settings; • Commission induction/training for new early years leaders, managers and owners; • Investigate the possibility of part funding the costs of additional accredited training for EYFS staff. <p>Outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of EYFS settings with highly qualified staff. • More staff accessing courses for higher level qualifications. 			<p>Autumn 2014</p> <p>Spring 2015</p>		
Funding								
R7	<p>It is recognised that the Council's financial position may not allow additional resources to be invested in early years education. However, some re-allocation of resources should be considered to improve early years attainment as evidence suggests this will also improve attainment at Key Stage 1 & 2. The review board recommends that:</p> <p>a) ESCC review the allocation of funding for early years education through the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources</p>	<p>The CSD share the view that, in spite of the Council's financial position, there is a need to investigate ways of allocating additional resources to the development of Early Years education.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Prepare paper to present to Schools' Forum on projected costs involved in:</p>	<p>November 2014</p>					

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT – ACTION PLAN		
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
<p>(RPPR) process, and by agreement with the Schools Forum, to provide a 2 year transitional programme of resources for early years provision in 2015/16 and 2016/17 to fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transformative measures to raise staff qualification levels in all settings; • training for early years educator level 3 qualifications; • delivery of more quality across the foundation stage and early years village projects and; • the establishment of peer to peer quality improvement networks so that all providers are included within a network of providers. <p>b) The East Sussex early years funding formula is changed to encourage and enable pre-school providers to employ well qualified staff through the use of an enhanced lump sum supplement for high quality providers.</p> <p>c) Officers investigate the mechanism for calculating the per child amount in the early years funding that ESCC receives from central government, to ensure it reflects fairly the needs of children in the County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating training for early years practitioners to acquire higher qualifications; • supporting expansion of the Village Project to all schools and settings in East Sussex; • establishing peer to peer quality improvement networks; • revising the funding formula for pre-school providers so that they are able to employ more qualified staff; • adjusting the level of funding per child so that it more fairly reflects the needs of the children in East Sussex. 	

